THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON CULTURAL HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

The debate on sustainability has put in place serious discourses and disagreement towards matters that has to do with the culture of the people and their environment. The discourses and disagreements has always hinged on the fact that achieving development that will put into consideration environmentally and culturally friendly, is not very easy to come by. The main reason is that severally matters of development get into contention with matters that have to do with the environment and culture. This paper is situated on the environmental archaeological and cultural impingement assessment embarked upon, at Obudu Ranch in cross rivers state Nigeria. The paper bring to light antagonistic enthusiasms amidst the development private company – MTN and the community traditional rulers not beyond a cultural landscape which lamentably is seriously under litigation as a result of ownership dispute. The study brings to light the disruption in erecting of an MTN booster as a result of contrary comprehension of environment, culture and sustainable development by institutions, local communities and traditional leadership involved. This has nothing to do with the fact that the members of the community need to be connected to other parts of the World. As a result of the above, the above this paper is of the opinion that a design of an across the board sustainable development plan that will boost development that is economic, political, cultural and environmental friendly should be put in place.

Keywords: Stakeholders, Traditional Leadership, Telecommunication, Disagreement, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of sustainable development has evoked burning discourses all over the World, concerning the conflict around culture and environment in terms of development. The discourses and engagements have been principally a corollary that development which is environmentally, and cultural beneficial is fundamentally Herculean to come by. Temple, (1992) in defense of the overused of the word “sustainable” opined that a whole lot is now sustainable for example sustainable agriculture, sustainable societies, sustainable economics, sustainable development, and sustainable growth etc. this ax to grind with the term “sustainable” have the appearance to have come up as a result of developing countries losing beyond price cultural effects as countless infrastructural developments such as, schools, telecommunications structures, hotels etc are being put in place. Some of these infrastructural developments clash with the conservation of environment and culture of the host communities. Kiriiama (2010) opined that:
“African countries endeavour to improve the standard of living for their people, they have sought to attract new investments and also embarked on accelerated development programs normally result in conflict with the communities where the programs are implemented, while in general, development projects results in cultural properties that include natural, cultural, movable, immovable, tangible and in tangible resources being destroyed in most cases”

Otto Schuter (geographer from German) has a pat on his back as having put into use the World landscape as an academic World in the early 20th century that the defined as a “landscape that is created by human nature” (James & Martin, 1981). The World heritage committee (WHC) in its guidelines defined cultural landscapes thus: “cultural properties that represent combined works of nature and of man ……… they are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and / or opportunities presented by natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural, (WHC operational Guidelines, 2008)”

The conceptualization of cultural landscapes in ancestry administration was advanced in Europe, making Africa to trail behind in terms of the administration and conservation of these landscapes by the lay down rules of the West is used as a criteria. Tongariro National park of New Zealand was the first cultural landscape to be catalogued on the World Heritage list in 1993, and there after close to sixty have been catalogued (Fowler, 2003) it is burdening that from the catalogue, Africa recorded the fewest of sites irrespective of Africa endowment in natural and cultural heritage. In Nigeria out of the five sites on the World Heritage Catalogue only Calabar Landscape merited the list hinging on the grouping, bringing together other confrontations, cultural landscapes never cease to be threatened by development. Development that is sustainable, that will put up a better World environment for the present and future generation has been trending over a decade now. However, the suitability during the administration of cultural landscapes in Nigeria has continued to be a confrontation to the developers, local communities, professionals and stakeholders. Kiriama, (2010) contend that it is effortless to debate on sustainable development with allusion to natural heritage, for instance, if treess plants are affecte d other trees can be planted to take their place, but we cannot equate the above with cultural heritage, once annihilated there is no replacement. The above shows that sustainable development layout are thus a demur to put in place as it concerns cultural heritage as it’s not renewable.

This paper’s limelight is on sustainable development on cultural landscapes, using the case study of Obudu cattle Ranch – calabar cultural landscape, located in southern part of Nigeria. The paper delved into the remonstrance’s of sustainable development on cultural heritage sites as to conjecture conceivable ways of going around such problems. The study was goad by the Calabar cultural landscape that has turned into a battle field of controversy and antagonistic interests amongst the players: the developer, environmental management Agency, Traditional rulers, organization in charge of heritage management in the country and other governmental authorities. The fundamental area of contentions comes from the very serious issue of “who is who” as it concerns, sustainable development on cultural landscapes. The cultural and Archaeological impingement engineered by the author of this paper attest beyond the bounds that the study site is really a cultural landscape that is behold by the people to be consecrated. The issue of ownership amongst the traditional rulers has also contributed to the conflicting situation in the area.
1.2 Research Problem

The Telecommunication development that is ongoing in Nigeria can be seen as a pivot to the advancement and development of the Nigeria economy. It is a spark plug for Nigeria’s economic advancement. In the process to expand their network coverage, their technical supporting structures are still ongoing, mainly in form of basic stations across the country. The cultural landscapes are being jeopardized as a result of some of the developmental projects.

Most of the base stations installations in Nigeria are done with or no pre-development impingement assessment and consultations of the stakeholders. According to an officer from environmental management Agency, wireless installations do not pose threats to the environment. Thus the green light given to MTN to proceed with their installations without putting in place environmental impingement assessment in an unclouded observation, there has been an outburst from the local chief from the host communities connected to the shrewdness of cultural landscapes within and after installation of boosters.

As a result of poverty, absence of basic infrastructures buckle with clash of passion amongst stakeholders in cultural landscapes lingers, before the Obasanjo administration many rural areas in Nigeria had no tele communication service. A part from not having a good telecommunication network services in these areas under study is, there managers of these places depend on effective communication systems to run their business.

As a result of poverty, absence of basic infrastructures buckle with clash of passion amongst stakeholders in cultural landscapes lingers, before the Obasanjo administration many rural areas in Nigeria had no telecommunication network service in these areas understudy is, there are hostels and other tourist attraction, and the effective communication systems to run their businesses. It is around Calabar cultural landscapes that you found: Obudu cattle Ranch, Tinapa etc. Thus the big break of mobile network is crucial in these areas. “how sustainable development in cultural landscapes such as Calabar can be put in place when developing telecommunication systems” the base station project being executed by MTN wireless has grounded as concerns parties are trapped in all-round disagreement in line with the development . The owners of business on their part want the project to be completed as it will help boost their businesses, as reported by an official in Tinapa (interview/2012).

2. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

The study selected various data collection methods that were designed at having an understanding of Calabar landscape in line with the disagreements that had put to the stoppage of development in the area, especially the installation of MTN booster. The methods included ethnographic enquires, informal discussions, unstructured interviews archaeological field work, surveys and library research. Ethnographic technical-informal interviews and discussion were used to generate qualitative data. We considered the informant knowledgeable, age and wealth of experience were taking into consideration. Archaeological field work and surveys were used to collect historical facts about the artifacts of inhabitant of the area. Underneath is a table showing informants who took part in the discussions and interviews. In the library research, many previous research activities pointed to invaluable archaeological sites in the area under study.

3. FINDINGS FROM ETHNOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES

The ethnographic results are hinged on the research that was carried out in Calabar cultural landscape area between October, 2011 and November, 2012. The results are as follows:

- The elders of the communities were of the opinion that MTN dishonor the clan and as such should appeased their angry ancestors
The cost of conciliation observance which will take place in the community includes: two cows, traditionally brewed gin, palm wine, soft drinks, ingredients to cook the cow, and money.

At the conclusion of the ceremony and money paid to the chief and community-MTN would be giving the go ahead to resume their construction.

The elders have full knowledge of the cultural importance of their cultural landscape when the project started in 2011, but decided to hold their peace since they were not approached by anybody concerning cultural issues apart from wanting to put the service in the area.

4. EVALUATION OF RESULTS FROM ETHNOGRAPHIC ENQUIRIES

The traditional leaders and the subjects showed their enthusiasm to grab the network booster development as soon as a befitting modus operandi and a complementary atonement is put in place. The ethnographic results also shows that the Calabar cultural landscape (the study area) is of enormous scientific and cultural importance as some of the chiefs who lived there years back were buried there, thus the people saw it as their ancestral home. The ethnographic cross-examinations contributed a bulk of data that arouse further study to authenticate and put the data collected during archaeological enquiries in the proper perspectives. The adjoining communities survey to confirm more facts collected from library and ethnographic researches, showed invaluable archaeological evidence in the groupings of burial places, dry stone walls and iron smelting sites, grain bins, homesteads. Table 1 summaries the archaeological findings-cultural material-realized during the survey.

Table 1: Summary of Result From Calabar Archaeological Field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of sites and frequency</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Conservation/preservation on status</th>
<th>Descriptive of material culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burials</td>
<td>Open space, in caves and over hangs</td>
<td>Burial in open space were sometimes vandalize, those in caves are safe</td>
<td>The burials had human skeletons and other items drop by relating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain bins and platforms</td>
<td>Open granite platform and over hang</td>
<td>Disintegrated</td>
<td>In association with lower and upper grinding stones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homesteads</td>
<td>Open space and in caves</td>
<td>Vandalized structures</td>
<td>Hardened clay surfaces, bone remains and pieces of metals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry stone walls and terraces</td>
<td>Around caves entrances and hill slopes</td>
<td>Some blocks removed thus collapsing</td>
<td>Rough types walling-spanning gaps-demarcate slopes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron smelting sites</td>
<td>Open ground both at the hill top and foot</td>
<td>Furnace disintegration</td>
<td>Iron smelting slag and broken into pieces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Burial material was apparently the great abounding and captivating specie of archaeological evidence in the study area.
5. CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CALABAR

The abstraction of sustainable development has captivated manifold theories and definitions as it held sway over local, national and international forums. In any case the most common of them all is the one given by Gro Harlem Bruntland, the then chairperson of the World Commission on Environment and Development. His definition runs thus: “development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations report. 1987). Michael Thomas Needham (2011) gave a similar definition as: “sustainable development is the ability to meet the needs of the present while contributing to the future generation needs.” Using Needham’s definition, we argued that it is our generation that set up a preferred future for our future generations. Thus our choice of Needham’s definition of sustainable development is exculpated. The conceptualization of sustainable development was type cast in the past into three components namely: socio-political sustainability, environmental sustainability and economic sustainability (United Nations report 1987). There were lots of criticisms that arose from this division. The prominent amongst them is seeing the economy as a unit that breathes on its own without the other two divisions, (Needham, 2011). An appraisal of the three divisions: Economics, environment and socio-political, shows that the three divisions are not enough to rebound the multiplicity of our contemporary societies.

The world congress held in Mexico in 2010 adopted culture as the forth division of sustainable development as passed on the 17th of Nov., 2010, in the framework of the world summit of local and Regional Leaders. Base on the above we contend that for sustainability to be achieved while putting developmental projects in place within a cultural landscapes; cultural divergence should be held uppermost for humans just as biodiversity is for future.

In Nigeria, the contention of sustainable development has been on the front burner all this while, but there is attestation that no many really know what it’s all about, including those highly placed in government. If people we entrusted our sovereignty to are not conversant with sustainable development trends, how can they guard our younger generation in the management and preservation of our environment? The developer MTN was aware that the installation of a booster at Calabar cultural landscape goes with civil works with negative impact on the environment and cultural material; they started the project without any pre-development impingement assessment of the cultural landscape. And this was the gun-powder to ignite the crisis between the stakeholders and the developers, with the stakeholders contending that their cultural landscape was rich in mortuary and archaeological heritage. This neglect of the fourth division of sustainable development affected the project completion which is necessary but did not follow due process as far as the conceptualization of sustainable development is concerned. The experience in Calabar cultural and landscape is the same with the findings of Oloo and Namunaba (2010) in Kenya, were EIA’s were rarely put in place before the commencement of projects.

6. POLITICS AND CONFLICTS AROUND CALABAR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Calabar landscape is celebrated because it has always had contention as its second name. The localize contest between two chiefs as regards the ownership of the cultural landscape divided the area into two war torn faction with the entanglement of adding fuel to fire of state institutions (ministries, local council, department of lands, natural resources, agricultural and water) Fontein, 2011). As a result of the above disagreement we argue that it is not very easy to come through sustainable development on cultural landscapes without proper apportionment and sustainable dialogue between stakeholders and developers as was in Calabar. Due to these myriads of disagreements, the business environment and the local people are suffering the lack of mobile connection in the cultural landscape of Calabar.
7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In support with Mupira, Sinamai et al, (2010) we recommend that cultural heritage administrators should pay more attention on preserving non-renewal cultural heritage resources as they put in place measures that will make the local communities derive benefit from the improvement and advancements that the development brings. Cultural heritage institutions should put in place a continuous process of research and documentation of cultural heritage sites in the country. The end product of the research should not be kept in files inside drawers but published and made public. The publications should also be made available to developers as they come into any cultural landscape in the country. It will help in putting an end to issues such as the ones encounter in Calabar cultural landscape. We also call for dogmatic archaeological surveys as an apparatus close to security of sustainable development on cultural landscapes and putting an end to grey areas between the stakeholders and developers.

Furthermore, the stakeholders and cultural heritage organizations should put in place a proper education of what they have to the developers as well as the inhabitants. This will clear the reasoning of the contracting companies who value not any attachment of human beings to their cultural landscapes heritage. The government should caution developers to burn out all avenue of discussion with stakeholders before developmental projects should start. Moreso, recommend a democratic and sustainable dialogue among the developers and the stakeholders to be anchored by the administrator of environment and heritage. Lastly, the National Assembly should put in place a process that will see to the amendment of all the outdated acts to curb the hindrances in the departments executing the work properly.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper has affirmed the notion that change goes hand in hand and that one cannot be detached from the other. We have shown how problematic it is when elementary developmental procedures are not put in place. We have seen how significant impingement assessment as a forceful apparatus of sustainable administration of the heritage and environment. The Calabar heritage used as a case study has brought to limelight means of escape in the administration of environment and heritage in Nigeria, thus the exigency for a new approach of administration.

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